

## WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A reputation authority for electronically storing reputation information relating to a user comprising:

a database for storing said reputation information;

5 security measures for verifying identities of at least one of said user and a plurality of community organizations; and

a communication system for receiving said reputation information and transmitting said reputation information to said plurality of community organizations responsive to an authorization received by said user.

2. The reputation authority of claim 1 wherein said reputation information comprises at least one of:

5 information related to activities of said user;

information related to qualifications of said user; and

information related to reliability of said user.

3. The reputation authority of claim 1 further comprising:

5 a certification engine for certifying authenticity of said transmitted reputation information.

4. The reputation authority of claim 1 further comprising:

a reputation information classifier for grouping pieces of said reputation information into predetermined categories related to activities conducted with said plurality of communication organizations.

5. The reputation authority of claim 4 wherein said plurality of community organizations receives said reputation information in categories related to said activities conducted on said plurality.

6. The reputation authority of claim 1 wherein said user authorization is provided by said user to said plurality of community organizations for retrieving said reputation information from said reputation authority.

7. The reputation authority of claim 1 wherein said user authorizes said reputation authority to transmit said reputation information to said plurality of community organizations.

8. The reputation authority of claim 1 wherein at least one of said user and said plurality of community organizations subscribes to said reputation authority in order to participate in said electronically storing reputation information.

9. A method for providing a centralized repository of identity attributes comprising the steps of:

verifying an identity of one of an associated user and an accessing third party responsive to a request to access said centralized repository;

5 receiving said identity attributes from at least one of said verified associated user and said verified accessing third party;

storing said identity attributes in a database indexed according to said verified associated user; and

10 delivering at least one set of said identity attributes to said verified third party responsive to an authorization received from said verified associated user.

10. The method of claim 9 wherein said storing step includes the step of:

categorizing said identity attributes into sets related to activities of said accessing third party.

11. The method of claim 10 wherein said at least one set comprises said sets related to activities of said accessing third party.

12. The method of claim 9 further comprising the step of:

processing a request for said at least one set of identity attributes from said accessing third party, wherein said associated user provides said authorization to said accessing third party.

13. The method of claim 9 further comprising the step of:

updating said stored identity attributes from at least one of said associated user and said accessing third party; and

certifying said at least one set of said identity attributes.

14. The method of claim 9 further comprising the step of:

registering at least one of said associated user and said accessing third party with said centralized repository of identity attributes for receiving prior to said verifying step.

15. A reputation management clearinghouse comprising:

means for verifying an identity of one of a plurality of users and a plurality of participating user communities responsive to a request to access said clearinghouse;

means for storing reliability data from one of said verified plurality of users and said 5 verified plurality of participating user communities;

means for associating said stored reliability data with an associated user; and

means for releasing selected reliability data to one of said verified plurality of participating user communities responsive to consent given by said associated user.

16. The reputation management clearinghouse of claim 15 further comprising:

means for updating said stored reliability data from at least one of said plurality of users and said plurality of participating user communities.

17. The reputation management clearinghouse of claim 15 wherein said means for storing includes:

means for classifying said reliability data into groups related to activities of said plurality of participating user communities.

18. The reputation management clearinghouse of claim 17 wherein said selected reliability data comprises said groups related to activities of said plurality of participating user communities.

19. The reputation management clearinghouse of claim 15 further comprising:

means for processing requests for said selected reliability data from said plurality of participating user communities, wherein said verified one of said plurality of users provides said consent to said plurality of participating user communities.

20. The reputation management clearinghouse of claim 15 further comprising:

means for processing a request to deliver said selected reliability data from said verified one of said plurality of users, wherein said verified one of said plurality of users provides said consent to said reputation management clearinghouse.